

GENERAL NOTES.

Recent Occurrence of Iceland Gulls near New York.— During the past few years there have been some sight identifications of the Iceland Gull (*Larus leucopterus*) near New York City, which indicate that this species, though rare, occurs here every year or two between the middle of January and end of March. In this connection attention is called to remarks on the occurrence of the Iceland Gull near Boston and its satisfactory identification in life in 'The Auk,' July, 1908 (F. H. Allen, *Larus kumlieni* and other northern Gulls in the neighborhood of Boston, p. 296). As the validity of "sight" records depends on the circumstances under which they are made, we quote pertinent matters from the notes of the respective observers.—

1906, March 5. Observations by Dr. W. H. Wiegmann.

"The following observations were made [on a single Iceland Gull] opposite the Hoboken terminal of the Lackawanna R. R. and adjacent northerly pier . . . Size noticeably smaller than the numerous Herring Gulls present: body more bulky with shorter and broader wings: entire head, neck, under surface of wings and under parts, pure white: mantle lighter than in *argentatus*: bill yellow, no carmine spot observed; distal ends of primaries white . . . *Larus leucopterus* would fly towards water, settle and pick up some drifted garbage; then was at a distance of less than 50 ft. from my position. I also saw the bird pass over me at 25 feet."

1912. Observations by Ludlow Griscom.

"Feb. 6th. Hudson River from Liberty St. Ferry. Just as I was leaving the slip, several gulls flew by about 50 yds. away, and I saw at once that one of them was one of the white-winged species, a fact immediately verified by my prism glasses. At first the birds flew away, but a minute later wheeled with the other gulls and hovered over the same spot while the ferry came nearer, giving perfect views. It [the Iceland Gull] was noticeably smaller than the Herring Gulls, the head and bill appearing much slighter and more slender. The bird was an adult pure white with pearl gray on mantle and wings. The red spot on the lower mandible was noted also. As the ferry came very near indeed, all the gulls rose in the air and flew directly over my head at a maximum distance of 30 feet just clearing the upper deck, when every marking, except the red spot on the bill, could be seen with the naked eye."

"March 29th. Central Park, New York City.

Mr. S. V. LaDow and I saw an adult Iceland Gull with a large flock of Herring Gulls on the Reservoir. The smaller size and slenderer head and bill was again noted . . . [In my absence] the Iceland Gull approached within 20 feet of Mr. La Dow thus giving him an incomparable observation."

1915 and 1916. Observations by J. T. Nichols.

"Feb. 13, 1915. Fort Lee Ferry, New York City. An immature plumaged Gull, paler and more uniform than a young Herring, with the primaries largely white, seemed about the size of Herring Gulls which flew up with it from an ice-pan in the river. It could only have been an Iceland Gull or very small Glaucous Gull, in all probability but not positively the former."

"Jan. 19, 1916. Twenty-third Street Ferry. New York City. An adult plumaged Iceland Gull seen nicely among Herring Gulls, though without glasses, at close range, from the front of the boat. The delicate grey of the mantle extended well out on the wing not sharply contrasted with its white tip. It was appreciably smaller than the Herring Gulls, the head and bill less heavy, and had an ethereal look which I accredited to its having a paler mantle, although by then my chance had passed for direct comparison of the tone of same. Its head and neck were clouded with brownish, its feet pink."—LUDLOW GRISCOM AND J. T. NICHOLS, *New York City*.

The Arctic Tern in Central New York.—On May 20, 1915, I was fortunate enough to collect an adult female of this species mixed in with Common and Black Terns and Bonaparte's Gulls at the north end of Cayuga Lake. As Brewster and Townsend have shown, it is distinguishable in life from the Common Tern by its all crimson bill and more deeply forked tail. Early writers on New York State ornithology mention this species without definite data, and Bergtold gives it as an accidental visitor near Buffalo. The only definite record for the state is a male in Mr. Dutcher's possession taken on Ram Island shoals, July 1, 1884.

The record is of particular interest to my mind, however, in furnishing a definite date for the spring migration of this species, about which little or nothing is known. It seems to arrive on the New England breeding grounds about May 15, though I have been unable to locate a definite record. It has been noted near Mt. McKinley, Alaska, May 30, 1908. In localities where it is only a transient, definite data are again lacking. An extremely early specimen was taken at Ann Arbor, Michigan, April 9, 1875. There are two records for Hawaii, May 9, 1891, and April 30, 1902. Considering the breeding range, one would think that there must be at least three migration routes through the United States, one along each coast and one through the interior, as it breeds in Wisconsin and abundantly in North Central Canada. The scarcity of records is correspondingly remarkable.—LUDLOW GRISCOM, *Ithaca, N. Y.*

American Merganser, wintering at Boston, Mass.—I have noted this species (*Mergus americanus*) on Charles River, Boston, Mass., this winter as follows:

Dec. 24, 1915. I saw a single bird in the female plumage.

Dec. 25, 1915. Saw a single bird in female plumage in the morning, in the afternoon saw three.